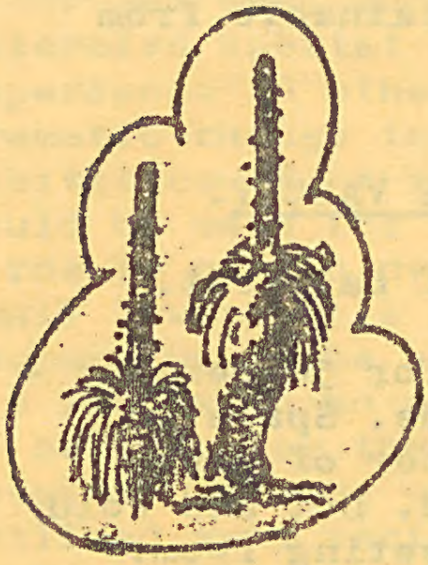

FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB OF BALLARAT

EXCURSION/NEWS SHEET - AUGUST 1978

President- Mr. G. Binns Ph. 323670
Vice-Pres- Mr. R. Borch 428630
Secretary- Miss H. Burgess 312210
Treasurer- Mr. S. Reynolds 327721

Meetings held in the Administrative Building at the School of Mines, Lydiard St. Sth. first Friday of each month at 8 p.m. (Unless otherwise stipulated)

MEETING: 4th August Dr. L. Prosser - National Parks - An International Perspective. Venue B.C.A.E. Campus at Mt. Helen.
MEETING: 8th September Mr. B. Whykes - Ecology of the Meliphaga Honeyeaters. Venue - Administrative Building at the School of Mines, Lydiard St. Sth. Ballarat.

EXCURSION: 6th August Mt. Cole. Leaving Crockers Corner (Armstrong St. side) We meet with the District Forester at a point between Fiery Creek Rd. and Flume Gully Rd. at 2 p.m. (See map)

SEPTEMBER EXCURSIONS: 10th Sept. Brisbane Ranges, Leader L. Fink. Full day.
Saturday 23rd September Mt. Erip Forest Block - Leader P. Fry - Half day.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMP-OUT - WARRNAMBOOL - AUGUST 26 & 27 1978.

Location: Allansford Hall (Allansford is approximately 10 km east of Warrnambool on the Princes H'way) & Jubilee Caravan Park, Allansford or Park etc. of choice (For Jubilee Park turn off Highway 1 km west of Allansford)
Programme: Saturday 28th- 1 p.m. Bush walk or Beach walk. 5 p.m. Tea. 6 p.m. Business Meeting. 8 p.m. Speaker - Mr. Barry Searle of Oasis Reptile Park, Warrnambool.

Sunday 27th - 9.30 a.m. Tower Hill Tour.
Any information re parks, motels etc. obtainable from the Secretary.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMP-OUT C.E.B.S. CAMP, SNAKE VALLEY.

OCTOBER 20-22nd 1978. Hosted by F.N.C. of Ballarat.

Accommodation at the Camp is bunk style for 56 persons - 4 cabins with 8 beds, 6 cabins with 4 beds. Space on site for caravans and tents; limited number of power outlets; extension leads are not provided. Hot and cold showers, kitchen facilities and dining/meeting room. Reservations: For sleeping accommodation and/or information, contact the Secretary, F.N.C. of Ballarat, Miss H. Burgess, 130 Moola St. Ballarat, 3350. Phone (Business) 341202, (A.H.) 312210.

WETLANDS MANAGEMENT.

Wildlife research officer Don White from Serendip gave a most interesting talk on wetlands management at the July meeting with emphasis on reserves, lakes and swamps in his own district and particular reference to plans for the development of the Clunes Swamps as a wildlife and game reserve. The club was very pleased to welcome members of interested groups from Clunes, Creswick and Maryborough, including a number of Clunes farmers.

Mr. White presented a study report and draft plans, prepared by temporary research officer Peter Hurley, for discussion and comment by clubs and groups involved. He said they would try to incorporate any suggestions in the final plan.

He said land purchases were continuing, initially around Merrin Merrin. John Clements had arranged for the Lands Dept. to do some noxious weed control to eradicate thistles and gorse. Stockproof fencing was being erected. This would enable tree planting to begin later this year. The Dept. hoped the original trees would be replaced by
2. planting and natural regeneration. Discontinuation of

grazing should encourage regeneration, particularly of River Red Gum, and a much better class of vegetation and waterbird habitat should be evident in a few years. From experience in other reserves he predicted quite a dramatic change in plant communities. Very good bird habitat could be created at little cost, he said. Dams would be used for fire control purposes and for waterbirds to use in dry spells when the swamps dried up. Some small low profile islands might be created in Middle Swamp. Farmers would be allowed to continue cropping on some of the land with an arrangement that part of the grain was to be left for the birds. Plans also provide for the possible release of native mammals in the area. Mr. White outlined some exciting projects in which species, depleted in number (such as Brolgas and Magpie Geese) are being bred at Serendip and released in the reserves. An experimental programme with Magpie Geese was proving successful at Tower Hill near Warrnambool.

Mr. White showed films of reserves under his control in the eastern half of Western Victoria, including Edwards Point Reserve and tidal mudflats of Port Phillip Bay, Lake Connewarre, the Reedy Lake complex with the biggest ibis rookery south of the Dividing Range, Tower Hill, Lake Corangamite, Lake Goldsmith and other swamps. He said some 5000 ibis came in to roost on an 80-acre lake at Serendip. Ibis had a very good capacity for devouring insects on farm land. At 100 grams a day, a flock like this would be eating something like ½-tonne of pasture pests a day. They were a most beneficial bird. Black Duck and Mountain Duck were also good for dealing with pasture pests. The occasional incidence of pasture damage was small in comparison with the good they did. Lake Corangamite was a most important area for moulting birds. An estimated 14-15,000 Mountain Duck were there last summer. There was quite a high mortality in most of the bird rookeries there because of foxes and interference by people. He said Lake Goldsmith was a very good wetland area. The environment was being improved by extensive tree-planting and attempts were being made to secure a more permanent water supply. He outlined plans to re-establish a swamp at Langi Kal Kal -- an

excellent project for any groups interested. Mr. White also referred to the detrimental effect European carp were having on wetlands, muddying the water and destroying the acquatic vegetation needed for native fish and birds.

M. Rotheram.

WANTED - INFORMATION

Mr. Don White of the Fisheries & Wildlife Department wants more information about Clunes Swamps. He said although the Dept. had a bird list from our club, with notes on birds known to have bred there, this was not complete and information was still lacking in many aspects such as breeding habits and mammal population. Any assistance in updating the bird list or any other observations would be appreciated...

He is also seeking information about Brolgas. The Dept. is concerned about their numbers which are thought to be declining in Victoria. He would like details of observations of Brolgas - locality, number, nesting sites. Most of the Brolgas lived on freehole land and it was important for owners to take an interest in them, he said...

If you see any waterbirds with identification colors please notify Serendip, or our own officer John Clements or the club, as the Department would be interested to have sighting records.

M. Rotheram.

"B.O.C." BLOCK WORKING BEE.

Ten B.F.N.C. members journeyed to Linton on 9th July to be joined by Mr. Gordon Clarke and two friends. We had quite a productive day, clearing gauze from along the creek and burning the great pile gathered. A large dead tree was cut down and into lengths, members

stacking the logs and clearing the area of debris - various other dead branches were cut, cleared and stacked.

A ring tailed possum was disturbed, and fled to the tip top of a eucalypt, where he created a lot of interest. Earlier in the day a black wallaby was sighted. Birds in the area were a bit scarce. The many varieties of wattles were in full bud, quite a few grevilleas flowering and a beautiful Hakea laurina attracted admiration. Mr. Clarke said there were to be 1500 more natives planted in the area in the near future.

At lunch we heard a story about Edith and a pelican. You must have more appeal than most, to attract one into your tent Edith!

B. Gray.

NERRINA EXCURSION: On Saturday 22nd July, some members of the club spent an interesting afternoon in the Nerrina bushland. This old goldmining area contains a typical peppermint-stringybark light forest. Poor stony soils, gullies and ridges, numerous mine shafts and old mining dams are to be found.

Nevertheless, the understorey vegetation is quite notable, and this provides cover for a varied bird population. We also found that the many dams in the area provide suitable habitat for water birds. Of particular interest were the various ferns, including tree ferns, that were found growing down some of the mine shafts. Our excursion finished late in the afternoon with a visit to Nuggetty Dam, a relic of the goldmining days. Here, reeds and a vast insect population make the dam a pleasant haunt for water birds.

NERRINA BIRD LIST:

Scarlet Robin, Yellow-tailed Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, Crimson Rosella, Eastern Rosella, White-eared Honeyeater, Laughing Kookaburra, Little Pied Cormorant.

NERRINA PLANT LIST:

Acacia aculeatissima	-	thin leaf wattle
Acacia melanoxylon	-	blackwood
Acacia dealbata	-	silver wattle
Acacia stricta	-	hop wattle
Hovea heterophylla	-	common hovea
Tetratheca ciliata	-	pink bells
Bursaria spinosa	-	sweet bursaria
Exocarpus cupressiformis	-	cherry ballart
Cassinia artctuata	-	drooping cassinia
Leptospermum juniperinum	-	prickly teatree
Euc. bazteri	-	brown stringybark
Euc. obliqua	-	messmate
Euc. dives	-	broad leaf peppermint
Euc. rubida	-	candlebark
Euc. ovata	-	swamp gum
Leucopogon virgatus	-	common beard heath
Hardenbergia violacea	-	coral-pea
Indigofera australis	-	austral indigo
Daviesia virgata	-	narrow leaf bitter pea
Pultenaea gunnii	-	golden bush pea
Daviesia latifolia	-	hop bitter pea
Oxylobium procumbens	-	trailing shaggy pea
Pultenaea humilis	-	dwarf bush pea
Themeda australis	-	kangaroo grass
Pterostylis parviflora	-	tiny greenhood
Pterostylis longifolia	-	tall greenhood
Burchardia umbellata	-	milkmaids
Pimelea humilis	-	small rice flower
Goodenia lanata	-	trailing goodenia
Dianella revoluta	-	spreading flax lily
Lomandra filiformis	-	wattle mat rush
Drosera whittakeri	-	scented sundew
Viola hederacea	-	ivy-leaf violet
Helichrysum apiculatum	-	common everlasting
Helichrysum obcordatum	-	grey everlasting
Senecio lautus	-	variable groundsel
Acaena anserinifolia	-	bidgee widgee
Ulex europaeus	-	gorse or furze
Stylidium graminifolium	-	grass trigger plant

Acrotriche serrulata	-	honey pots
Epacris impressa	-	Vict. (common) heath
Geranium solanderi	-	cut-leaf cranesbill
Centaury tenuifulium	-	common centaury
Pinus radiata	-	monterey pine
Salix caprea	-	pussy willow
Rosa rubiginosa	-	briar rose (sweet briar)
Rubus fruticosus	-	blackberry
Erica		
Pinus nigra	-	Corsican Pine
Brunonia australis	-	blue pincushion
Luzula campestris	-	field woodrush
Dillwynia sp		
Viola sieberana	-	tiny violet
Danthonia sp		
Euc. globulus ssp-pseudo globulus	-	blue gum

P. Murphy.

THE BIRD WATCHER'S BOOK CASE

Elizabeth told me some time ago that I had eighty books on birds. In actual fact as I found recently, and strictly confined to birds, the total is nearer seventy, and I don't feel quite so extravagant. Pride of place from a practical aspect would go to three books:- "A Field Guide to Australian Birds - Non-passerines", "A Field Guide to Australian Birds - Passerines" and "The Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds". The first two are by Peter Slater, and published by Rigby at $12.95 each. The third is published by Readers Digest Services Pty. Ltd. and is available to the members of the Bird Observer's Club for about $26 including postage. These three books should form the nucleus of an Australian bird watcher's collection.

The Bird Observer's Club have published a useful range of books and guides among which are "Field Guide to the Hawks of Australia", "Field Guide to the Waders" and books on Australian Honeyeaters and Australian Fly-catchers. Unfortunately now out of print (I think) is

Australian Waterfowl, produced jointly by the Fisheries & Wildlife Dept, Victoria and I.C.I. Ltd. "A Hand list of the Birds of Victoria" by Roy Wheeler and published by the Victorian Ornithological Research Group has been well used. The same author has yet to produce a volume on "Birds and Where to Find Them"-Victoria. It is hoped that it will not be long coming for he has already published a book with a similar title covering 50 different localities in N.S.W. This book is published by the Jacaranda Press and is again available through the B.O.C.

Cayley's "What Bird is That", Angus & Robertson is worth having, if you already have the Slater volumes, as a further reference. "An Australian Bird Book", Leach (my copy was published by Whitcombe & Tombs P/L) is much less useful especially as my copy illustrates less than 50% of the birds of Australia in colour.

Other books for pleasure rather than just for identification are "Australian Birds" by Robin Hill, "Australian Parrots in Colour" by Len Robinson (only $2.25 when I bought my copy) & The Australian Women's Weekly Beautiful Birds at $2.95. One has to be quite keen to own "Birds of Prey of Australia" by Frank T. Morris and published by Lansdowne at $19.50. I shall always regret that I didn't buy a second copy of "A Portfolio of Australian Birds" by William Cooper & Keith Hindwood and published by Reed. I could have bought a remainder copy for $2 - "twenty five superb full colour plates" large enough for framing at around 8c each!

F. Harrap.

"AUSTRACK" SAFARI TOURS.

A special tour, to be led by Dr. J.H. Willis will leave Melbourne on Monday 2nd July 1979 for 26 days. The itinerary will include visits to Trafina Gorge, N'Dala Gorge, Mt. Laughlan, Mt. Pfitzner, Mt. Freeling Standley Chasm, Serpentine Gorge, Mt. Sonder, Gosse's Bluff, Hermansburg, Palm Valley, Glen of Palms, King's Canyon and Mt. Cuthbert. A very limited number of seats are available, approx. cost $845. Book now with L. S. Millar, "Austrack" Special Tours, c/- Wayside Mail, Beaufort, 3373.